

CLASS OF 1863

OF

HARVARD COLLEGE

MEMOIRS

APRIL, 1917, TO APRIL, 1918

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EDWARD GRAY STETSON, son of Caleb [Harvard, 1822] and Julia A. (Meriam) Stetson, was born in Medford, Massachusetts, November 4, 1840. He died in San Rafael, California, November 6, 1917. He fitted for College at Phillips Exeter Academy.

At the time of Edward's birth his father (born in Kingston, Massachusetts, in 1793) was pastor of the First Church in Medford, where he was settled from 1827 to 1848.

Edward's grandfather, Thomas Stetson, was born in Kingston in 1752. He followed the sea for thirty years, and during the Revolution was in command of several armed letter-of-marque ships. Twice he was taken prisoner by the British. On one occasion his crew, except himself, his mate and a boy, were removed to the British vessel, and an officer and twelve men put on board his ship as a prize crew to take the ship into Port-au-Prince. The Americans were well treated and allowed their liberty on board the ship. One morning Thomas Stetson, choosing his time when all but two of the Englishmen were below at breakfast, and himself, his mate, and the English lieutenant and the man at the wheel were on deck, managed to surprise the two latter, and get possession of the deck. Then sending the prize crew ashore in a boat, for they were in sight of Port-au-Prince, he shaped his course for the States with only a gallon of water on board. But a timely shower filled one of their water-casks, and at length, in spite of the many British cruisers in those seas, they brought the ship safe into Charleston harbor.

Robert Stetson, who came to this country probably from the County of Kent in England, and settled in the town of Scituate in 1634, held several positions of trust under the government of Plymouth Colony. In 1658 he was appointed Cornet of the first troop of horse raised in the Colony. In the year 1661 the Cornet

was chosen a member of the Council of War of the Colony and held the office twenty years. He was engaged in King Philip's War, and in 1667 was appointed a commissioner to visit Philip "in behalf of the country." He died in 1703 at the age of ninety.

In the fourth generation from this Robert Stetson was born Edward's grandfather, a taste of whose adventures has been given above.

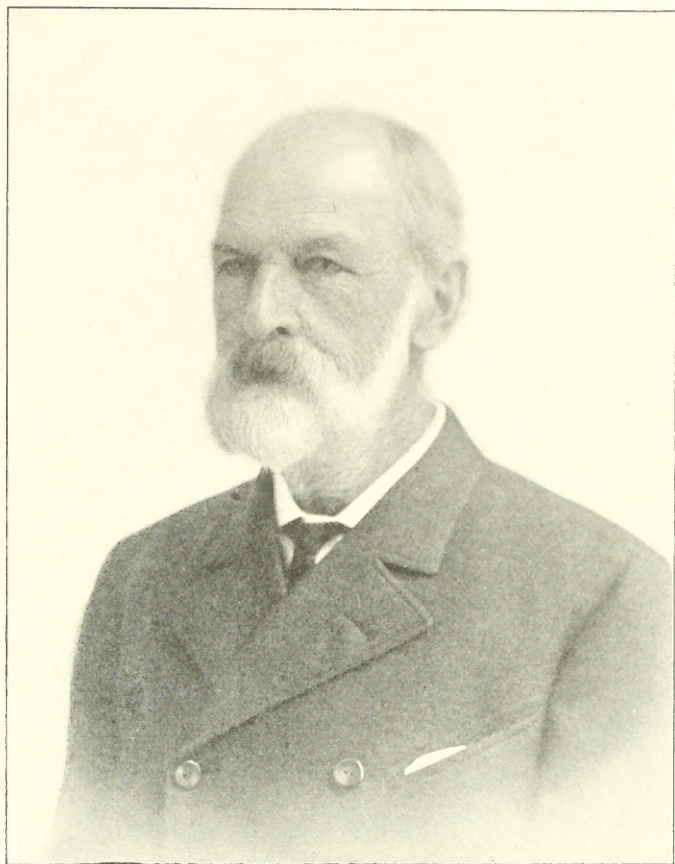
In 1848 Edward's father removed to South Scituate, and there was Edward's home until 1859, and he acquired the rudiments of education in local schools and "academies" until in 1856 he was sent to Phillips Exeter Academy, and completed his fitting for college in 1858. Some little trouble with his eyes led to his doing, as he says, "nothing more profitable for a year than shooting and sailing about on the North River at home [Scituate] and in the winter teaching school."

"After this year of idleness," he writes, "during which my father removed to Lexington, it suddenly entered my head about a fortnight before the annual examinations for admission at Harvard that I might as well turn my college fit to some account, and go to Cambridge. Accordingly I vigorously laid siege to Alma Mater, who after a stout resistance surrendered *on conditions*."

Stetson easily took high rank in college. Standing number fourteen in the Freshman year, for Sophomore and Junior years he was number one, and in Senior year number seven. He delivered the Latin Oration at the inauguration of President Hill, March 4, 1863. He was made a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in April, 1862. He was chosen by the Class as a member of the Mock Part Committee, a tribute to his acknowledged vein of humor, and as an Assistant Marshal on Class Day, an honor testifying to popularity and good-fellowship, as well as good looks.

At the time of graduation he writes: "My plans of life are not yet formed, for I know not what I am made for. Man always seemed to me to have retained the nature that was given to Adam; that is, to be fitted for living in an Eden, where everything is ready for his hand, and where work as a *necessity* is unknown."

"Never having taken much fancy to the producing of literature,"



Yours ever
Edw. May Jr.



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he writes, "I have seldom gone further than I have been obliged to go, and themes and such like productions are almost my only achievements in this line. A single Latin oration delivered at the Inauguration of Dr. Hill is the only printed work that can call me its author. A Detur in the Sophomore year, a Bowdoin prize for Greek composition in the Junior year, a part at each Exhibition, and the already mentioned Latin oratorship are all the academic prizes or honors I have obtained." To these should be added an "Oration" on our Commencement Day.

After leaving college he was appointed, in August, 1863, a superintendent of plantations, as were also his classmates Waters and Morison, and together they lived on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, engaged in raising cotton. Here Stetson remained until May, 1865, when he was commissioned with two others by the general commanding the District of Florida to travel through the interior of that state, to investigate the condition of whites and negroes, and to assist in re-establishing order and industry among them. After a month of this work he went back to Jacksonville.

He returned to the North in December, 1865, and was for some time a private tutor at Champlain, New York.

In September, 1866, after having spent two months in a law office in New Bedford, he entered the Law School at Cambridge. During his course there he acted as proctor in the college, and also gave private instruction to undergraduates, and assisted Professor Parsons in the preparation of his work on Insurance.

In September, 1868, he sailed by way of Panama for San Francisco. There, after studying the local law and practice, he was admitted to the bar in April, 1869. In August of the same year he became a member of the firm of Barstow, Stetson and Houghton. Mr. Barstow severed his connection with the partnership in 1877, so that the firm became Stetson and Houghton.

In January, 1874, with a few other Harvard men of San Francisco, he organized a Harvard Club, of which he has since been a member and secretary. He was a director, and at one time president, of the Mercantile Library Association. He was also a

member of the Civil Service Reform Association and of the Union Club.

On January 1, 1889, his partnership with Mr. Houghton was dissolved, and he afterwards continued practice alone. He was married September 3, 1887, to Marion Cushing, daughter of Dr. John Jenckes Cushing of Mill Valley, California. They had two sons, Meriam, born in 1888, and Philip Cushing born in 1890. Writing to the Class Secretary in 1903 Stetson says: "In 1890 for reasons of health I went to live in the country at a place I call Toyon, in the Santa Margarita Valley, a little north of San Francisco, and there I have lived ever since, keeping my office in the city, and swinging daily like a pendulum from town to country, — most days in the city occupied with books and papers, and sometimes in the country watching the grass grow and the fruit ripen, and trapping the coons and foxes and coyotes, or, like Mr. Gladstone, swinging an axe. I have held no office except Trustee of a Country School District, which is not one of profit or honor, and as my co-trustees do not appear to approve of me, I should hardly call it an office of trust."

In April, 1906, came the San Francisco fire, and Stetson writes: "The earthquake of that date did me no great harm, but the fire destroyed everything in my office and some property outside of it. . . . I found the contents of my safe to be charcoal — others found only ashes. On the charcoal pages ink-writing had disappeared, — pencil-writing remained clear and legible. . . . I came to the conclusion that it was not worth while to bother any more about law offices; and not being so young as I was, I have gradually settled down to a semi-bucolic life in the country."

This is the record of a man of great natural ability, of rare capacity for friendship, and of high moral standards. If stress has been laid on his college career, and the few years before and after, the reason is that then we knew him, and since then he has been far away from most of us, but letters and frequent communications from him have shown that he retained the characteristics which we knew of old, and that he kept up his interest in the Class and the College.

That he did not fill a larger space in the world's eye may have been partly owing to his great modesty as to his own qualifications, and perhaps he retained some of that early ideal as to man's nature being fitted for an Eden. Let us hope that in his own Toyon he realized in some measure that ideal.

He was a beloved husband and a devoted father. One son, Philip, is in an aviation school, fitting himself for service abroad, and the other, Meriam, with his mother, is going to see what they can make the home acres produce for Uncle Sam.

WILLIAM HENRY LATHROP, son of William McCracken (Yale, 1825) and Charlotte Elizabeth (Belcher) Lathrop, was born in Enfield, Massachusetts, March 11, 1840. He died in Lowell, Massachusetts, December 25, 1917. He fitted for college at the Boston Public Latin School.

The Rev. John Lathrop, a minister of Barnstable in England, arrived in Scituate September 28, 1634, and settled in Barnstable in the Plymouth Colony. His youngest son Samuel afterwards settled in Norwich, Connecticut, and from him our classmate was directly descended. Rev. Joseph Lathrop, who graduated from Yale in 1754, and preached in West Springfield, Massachusetts, for sixty-three years, was our Lathrop's great-grandfather. His son Samuel (Yale, 1792) practiced law in West Springfield, and represented his District in Congress for eight years. His son William McCracken gave up the practice of the law in Enfield for a business career, and spent most of his life in or near Boston, and his son William Henry went to Harvard College, instead of Yale.

From August 29, 1862, to June 18, 1863, Lathrop was a private in the Forty-fourth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. During most of the time for three years after graduation he was in some way connected with the army. On August 10, 1863, he received an appointment as acting medical cadet in the Satterlee General Hospital at Philadelphia. He remained there for a year, attending medical lectures in the winter of 1863-64 at the Jefferson Medical College. In the winter of 1864-65 he took a course in

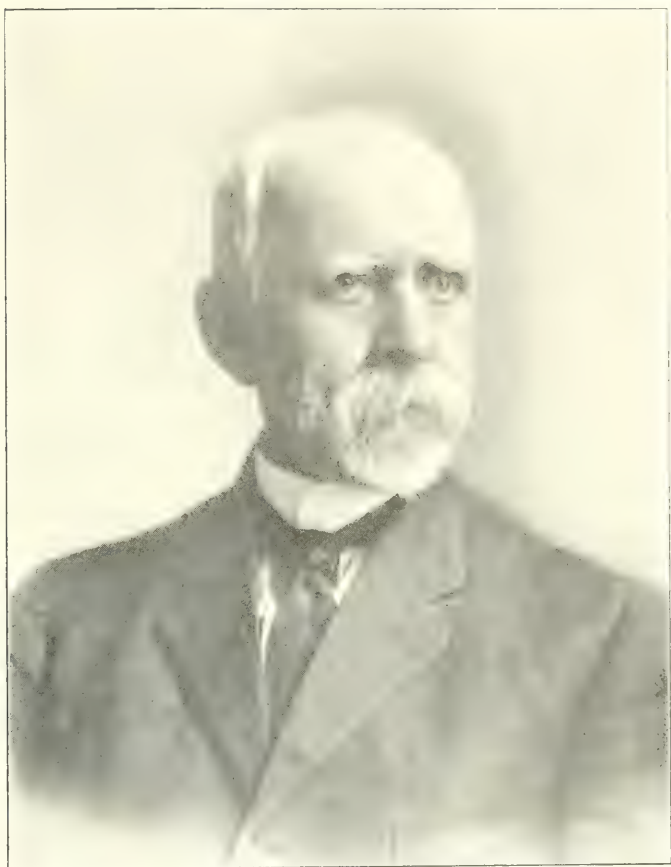
Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received the degree of M.D. March 11, 1865. March 16, 1865, he was appointed acting assistant-surgeon, and ordered to the army of the Potomac. June 14, 1865, he was commissioned assistant-surgeon of the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, and joined the regiment at Orangeburg, South Carolina; but the regiment was soon mustered out of service, and he was assigned to duty at Charleston, South Carolina. Afterwards he was on duty at Orangeburg and Barnwell, South Carolina, and later was stationed on a vessel near Hilton Head, as quarantine officer for that harbor.

He left the army November 1, 1866. He then spent some time in Philadelphia at the medical schools, went afterwards to Boston for a few months, and then to Chicago, where he began practice in August, 1867. He removed to Detroit, Michigan, on October 2, 1868, and entered upon his duties as Professor of Physiology in the Detroit Medical College. He retained his connection with that institution until March 1, 1873. For about two years, while in Detroit, he had charge of the Retreat for the Insane, and was City Physician for one year.

During most of the time that he was in Detroit he was assistant editor of the *Detroit Review of Medicine and Pharmacy*. In June, 1871, he became editor of a small quarterly, entitled the *Western Medical Advance*, published by Frederick Stearns, a druggist in Detroit. It was continued until June, 1873. During that time they published original colored representations of forty-nine American medical plants.

In March, 1873, he left Detroit to take medical charge of two county institutions, located about fifteen miles from the city, at Inkster. One of these was a poor-house and hospital, the other an insane asylum. In the former there was an average of about three hundred inmates, and in the asylum about one hundred. He was a member of the Detroit Academy of Medicine. On October 1, 1875, he was appointed resident physician at the State Alms-house, Tewksbury, Massachusetts.

He began the practice of medicine in Lowell on July 3, 1883,



Ever very truly
Wm. V. Lathrop

and lived there in the same house for more than thirty years. From 1890 he was for four years a member of the School Committee in Lowell.

He has been member and councillor of the Massachusetts Medical Society, Secretary and Treasurer of the Lowell Medical Journal Society, and a member of the New England Psychological Society. In 1901 he was President of the Middlesex North District Medical Society.

A writer in the *Boston Transcript* of December 29, 1917, in an appreciative notice of Lathrop, says: "Many will miss that kindly, cheerful greeting, as they go to their morning work — for it was among the workers he lived and worked, and they whose lives he knew best and truly honored. He was a skilful physician, a wise counsellor — a true friend. So simple in his life that he made no visible impression on the public life of the city where he lived, his best memorial is in the lives he healed and comforted, and in many a quiet home to-day he is beloved and mourned."

He was married September 6, 1871, to May Safford, daughter of Charles L. Safford of Detroit, who survives him.

